Our research question asks: In the last year what topics are disproportionately represented in the community r/TodayILearned? The goal is to find out what topics or subjects users have "learned" about the last year and what that says about this community. We hope to find interesting or unique reporting of certain topics over others.

Based on the coding of our sample data, several patterns have begun to emerge. First, there is a noticeable dominance of content that falls under the umbrella of Public Media. Many posts revolve around interesting facts about movies, actors, music history, and media events. Our initial thoughts were that r/TodayILearned would be about events in history or culture. However, this suggests that the r/TodayILearned community has a strong cultural leaning toward media literacy and shared entertainment knowledge. We didn't expect there to be so many entries that were related to people. This threw a wrench in the gears as when we originally discussed the idea of having a "people" code to allocate all posts that involved celebrities or historical figures there. That needed to be changed as such a large amount of our posts were people oriented. We opted to create codings on post-specific content about broader topics to resolve the people conundrum.

In addition to media-focused posts, History and Human Interest stories are heavily represented. These range from accounts of historical perseverance to emotionally compelling human experiences, such as the depression of 9/11 rescue dogs or remarkable survival stories. Posts coded as "Human Interest" often contain secondary codes that denote emotional tone or categories that can be associated. For instance many human interest posts overlap with our history codes as well. As far as we can tell in our preliminary analysis top posts are not only vehicles for information but also have emotional engagement.

Interestingly, while one might expect a subreddit focused on learning to have a high volume of "Science" or "Technology" topics, these appear less frequently in our dataset. Instead, users seem more drawn to narratives that blend information with entertainment and emotional impact.

To give a preliminary answer to our research question at this stage, we would say that r/TodayILearned is less of a purely educational community and more of a space for sharing culturally resonant, emotionally engaging stories. The top stories of the last year all seem to gather around the concept. While niche academic insights may exist, the community thrives on widely relatable content, especially from pop culture and history, that sparks curiosity or amusement.

Moving forward, we'd like to explore whether this trend holds across a larger sample size to see if our above conclusion is true. Our data is time-based however, it is limited by the time frame of just one year, which is not conducive to large-scale events such as the COVID-19 pandemic. We'd be curious to see if there are specific time patterns, such as whether certain themes spike around cultural events, anniversaries, or media releases. This could offer deeper insight into how external cultural moments shape what the community is "learning" and sharing.